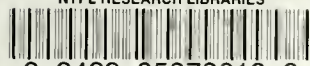


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Dickson

1841







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Compliments  
of  
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SYNOPSIS  
OF THE  
PROPOSED  
NEW POST OFFICE BUILDING,  
To be Erected  
IN THE  
CITY OF NEW YORK,  
FOR THE UNITED STATES,  
AS DESIGNED BY  
WALTER DICKSON,  
ARCHITECT.



ALBANY.

1867.

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"ESSE, QUAM VIDERI."



TO THE  
COMMISSIONERS

OF THE

*New Post Office Building,*

CONSISTING OF

HON. JOHN T. HOFFMAN (CHAIRMAN), - - - *Mayor,*  
HON. JAMES KELLY (SECRETARY), - - - *Post Master,*  
HON. SAMUEL G. COURTNEY, *United States Attorney Southern  
District New York,*  
HON. JONATHAN STURGES, *President Chamber of Commerce,*  
HON. JACKSON S. SCHULTZ,  
HON. MOSES TAYLOR,  
HON. CHARLES H. RUSSELL,  
HON. CHARLES H. ROGERS.





## SYNOPSIS.

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I have the privilege to submit to your honorable body for inspection and consideration the accompanying Design for the proposed new Post Office Building, to be located in the City Hall Park of the Metropolis.

To the courtesy of the Postmaster, the Hon. JAMES KELLY, I am, in common with others of my fellow architects, indebted for much of the preliminary information requisite before proceeding with the Design; and, since I have undertaken it, I trust that my efforts have not been unsuccessful, and that my work contains merit creditable to the project, to my friends, and to myself.

Doubtless there will be, among the galaxy of genius arrayed for the competition, many Designs more brilliantly executed and attractive

to the eye than mine; but I feel confident in your integrity and discrimination to adjudge of true worth, ungarished by the devices resorted to by many, and place before you a Design, plain, yet sufficiently ornamental; simple, yet consistently beautiful: plain, because of its very moderate display of decoration, objectionable because costly and perishable to an irremediable extent in our climate; and beautiful, because of its pure adherence to classic architecture, the acknowledged basis of truth and beauty in the building art.

In order that my description may be as brief and explicit as possible, imparting to your honorable body a comprehensive view of my work, I herewith proceed with it under its systematic heads as follows, to wit:

#### THE OBJECT ATTEINDRE.

The *objet atteintre* is the erection of a building to be adapted to the wants and conveniences of the Post Office Department and its officials, together with the different United

States Courts — and other appointments required by your Circular — all to be contained in one building, yet separate in their relations to each other. Also, the reserved space, for future wants, so highly important and yet so little considered in the erection of most of the public buildings in this rapidly growing country.

#### THE FORM.

The architect is necessitated by the restricted space and irregular contour of the ground, to closely adapt his Design to the same with but a sufficient variation of architectural outline to relieve what must otherwise be very monotonous in its character.

The building will accordingly be triangular, with scarcely any loss of space, that grand sought-for desideratum in the great metropolis.

#### STYLE OF ARCHITECTURE.

In all large cities the rivalry and competition among architects being great, and the demand

for variety so general. Art runs prodigal; and from the commingling and mixing of styles, orders and conglomerations, arise new born combinations which please for a day and then pass away, like the latest *modes de Paris*. But pure, exalted Art, that has stood the storm, fire and discord of ages, remains as dignified and as majestic as ever, witnessing from its solitudes and commanding abodes the vain attempts of man to surpass it, either in its simplicity or grandeur.

True, in this age of advancement, when progress marks the way, it seems humiliating to acknowledge this perfection, yet it is nevertheless true, and until we can excel the marbles, bronzes, mosaics, paintings and architectural examples of antiquity, we must be content.

I have adopted the Corinthian order as the most appropriate for my Design; always beautiful, and never tiresome, it commends itself to the good taste and judgment of the most refined and accomplished. For a public edifice, especially, it is for such reasons the most preferable.

## THE EXTERIOR.

Although the peculiar outline of the lot has been closely presented in my building, I have not lost sight of the sterling elegance produced by properly located porticos, breaks, balconies and other characteristics of beauty essential to monumental grandeur.

Perhaps I might have introduced a tower at the south façade, or square domed roofs upon the ends or centre of the others; but as the former might have partaken too much of that of a railway station or a church, and the latter of the hotels and Exposition buildings abroad, I chose rather to confine myself to that deemed in my judgment most appropriate for the purposes intended.

## THE INTERIOR.

It is always a difficult task to adapt a building to different uses, without confusion somewhere, and it exerts the greatest skill of the architect in the treatment thereof.

In this case I have satisfactorily succeeded in

securing, as far as the shape of the ground will permit, as well arranged a plan as can be desired.

THE GROUND OR PRINCIPAL FLOOR I have made thirteen feet (13 ft.) in height, with a mezzanine story ten feet (10 ft.). The central area to be over thirty feet (30 ft.) in height. The mezzanine story forming a wide gallery which commands the whole working floor, embodying for practical uses one of the greatest internal features of the building, being especially beneficial in supervising the ordinary business machinery of the department.

THE POST OFFICE HALL, or Public Corridor, surrounds the boxed partition upon the two streets, while the court for vehicles extends from street to street upon the north.

This floor will be arranged as the increased facilities will demand. Miniature railways will connect with the several staircases, and dummies for the transmission of matter to either the mezzanines, attic story or cellar, in all of which

stories these railways will be continued, the cars to be raised by the dummies.

THIS MEZZANINE STORY, situated over the grand Post Office Hall and partition boxes, affords a very advantageous position for the officers of special and private service in the Post Office. It also forms the gallery, simply divided from the same by glass doors or partitions, as may be determined upon. This mezzanine story is accessible from first landing of main stairs ground story, and from the three interior stairs indicated, and not only adds externally to the stateliness of the building, but materially to its internal grandeur and spaciousness; economy of space and perfect light and ventilation being especially desirable is here secured.

THE FIRST, OR GROUND STORY, contains no internal walls or piers, but iron columns which are to support those above.

THE CELLAR, being large, dry and well ventilated, to be used for packing and unpacking

purposes, storage, water closets, lavatories, cloak rooms, etc., etc. The sub-cellar and vaults for fuel, boiler and engine and heating apparatus.

THE COURT YARD, or carriage way, to be entered from either Park Row or Broadway, or from the Park, as may be desired, along side of which is a sidewalk or entrance for the employees to the Post Office. A balcony projects from the mezzanine story and commands the entire carriage way.

One of the highly important features of my plan, and certainly worthy of consideration, is that the Postmaster and his Assistants and Superintendents have prominent and accessible stand points and places throughout the general working department, where the operatives can be viewed at their work, at a moment's notice and without their knowledge.

THE FIRST, OR PRINCIPAL STORY, is probably as well planned as the form of the building will allow.



THE POSTMASTER AND AIDS are located in the most prominent portion of the building, with private rooms, halls, staircase, lavatories, water closets and cloak rooms, in convenient proximity, with the portico at their command.

THE PRIVATE STAIR spoken of extends from roof to cellar; the other stairs or gallery from mezzanine story to sub-cellar.

THE GRAND NORTH AND SOUTH STAIRS, beginning almost upon line of street, terminate in the corridors of first or principal story; the south ones having a landing from which the mezzanine story can be entered. The three grand staircases in the angles of the corridors, easy and symmetrical within themselves, resume the pleasing ascent to the attic.

The arrangement, form and capacity of these grand means of approach to the different stories constitute another prominent feature of the Design; their adaptation to localities, otherwise of but little use in ordinary plan making, and the light and air they afford, with that bor-

rowed from doors and fan lights, render the corridors all that could be wished.

THE GRAND NORTH STAIR, or approach from the Park, ascending over carriage way, leaves ample space underneath for the purposes designed.

The several COURTS are large, and can be made larger, or extended two stories in height, if required; but, as the story is twenty feet, it would seem sufficient.

These Courts and other general apartments are provided with vestibules to prevent any interruptions common to public places. They are also unique in form, and admirably arranged with regard to acoustics.

THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY has also a fine suite of rooms, as well as the prominent clerks of the several Courts.

RESERVED APARTMENTS are shown which, in the great machinery of the Post Office, will be found very desirable.

THE RECORD ROOMS are provided with iron alcoves and safes, and face upon the rear over the glass roof.

THE SECOND STORY is arranged similarly to the first. Should the courts not be carried up as before suggested, there will be added to the other reserved space two extra ones, which can be used advantageously for public or official purposes.

THE MARSHAL has a suite of rooms in this story, as also the BOARD OF ARBITRATION.

THE ATTIC to be devoted to Post Office purposes, and can contain the Janitor's rooms, connected with which will be other rooms upon the lower stories.

NOTE. — I would most respectfully direct the attention of your honorable body to the importance of the arrangement and distribution of my halls and general apartments in the event of any changes or alteration in the localities of the same, should actual experiment subse-

quently demand it, and which the wisdom and judgment of those controlling would deem as possessing many greater practical advantages over the present plan. Mine is easily susceptible of such treatment, and can harmoniously adapt itself to the circumstances without compromising its dignity in the least.

Your honorable body will also notice that I have no dark, ill ventilated apartments.

THE GARRET will be used for a loft, and for the protection of the story below from the sun's heat. The inner portion of this garret can be divided into desirable rooms.

In conjunction with the stories below, the dummies absolutely render them, by their rapid transmission or elevation of matter, as important and almost as easy of access as any in the building.

#### INGRESS AND EGRESS.

The general defect in most of our public buildings is the inadequacy of the means of ingress

and egress, none being properly planned unless this important feature is thoroughly treated.

It is an intuitive knowledge in passing through a spacious building, which inclines to certain stops, rests, ascents or descents; and, like that of the peculiar cadence of music, impresses us at once as to its propriety. In fact, there can scarcely be too many entrances and exits to any public structure.

To the ways of ingress and egress of my building, particular notice is requested. They are broad and inviting, and based upon so simple a principle as to require but little explanation to discover their merits.

The means which the Postmaster and his assistants have at their command to communicate readily with or inspect any department under their supervision, is, although it has before been alluded to, worthy of more especial consideration.

THE PRIVATE STAIR, with enclosed dummy, places all under his immediate personal control, from attic to cellar.

Does he wish to visit the attic, he ascends on stair or dummy, or to the mezzanine story, down to same, and, traversing the gallery, views the general business workings of the ground floor. If it be the carriage way, the balcony over same affords him an opportunity. Should it be to other points nearer than his own private medium of access, there are other stairs and dummies for his convenience. Consequently the building, internally, may be said with truthfulness to be under the eye of the Postmaster, and hence its good management is materially enhanced.

#### LIGHT AND VENTILATION.

Light and ventilation are afforded in profusion. The great central glass roof and ventilator pour their tempered rays of light upon the entire ground floor, being much assisted in the effect by the mezzanine windows. The cellar and sub-cellar receive direct light from floor lights and illuminated sills and vaults; while the upper stories have their immediate win-

## HYDRAULICS.

In order to be prepared for any emergency which might at any time arise, through defects in the supply of Croton water, lead tanks, three in number, might be built in attic, supplied by roof or service pipe for general use throughout the building, and as a reliable and instantaneous annihilator of fire, the presence of so much combustible matter requiring a simple and effective mode of extinguishment. There is probably none so simple as the means already adopted by the Postmaster in the present Post Office, of having distributed at commanding points and intervals rows of buckets always full of water and ready for instant use. Hydrants can be located at advantageous points for a similar purpose.

Lavatories and water closets to be supplied from these tanks.

## LAVATORIES AND WATER CLOSETS.

Following in the line of conveniences are the lavatories and water closets. Those for the different stories and the general apartments of

each are in easy proximity, as the plans indicate. Those for the Superintendents are in the basement or ground plan, also those connecting with ladies' waiting rooms.

Those for the employees are in the cellar.

#### CLOAK ROOMS.

All of the stories are sufficiently furnished with the necessary cloak rooms.

The large one in cellar for employees is intended for a sort of registry office through which the officer in charge is furnished with a correct tally of each one's time, when at work and when absent, and also for their surplus clothing while engaged, and for other purposes not explained.

#### CLOCKS, TELEGRAPH, ETC.

Every department and general apartment in building to be furnished with clock dials, with indicators worked by electricity, thus securing an exact and correct system.



The telegraph office to be located in the mezzanine or any other story afterwards determined upon, and, in addition to its legitimate work, will obtain the Dudley Observatory time.

#### SAFES AND VAULTS.

Vaults are clumsy, and have many objectionable features, while safes, as now constructed, are portable and of almost any size. Yet should it be deemed expedient to introduce vaults, the same could easily be done, but would have to be carried up from foundations.

Many things are necessarily omitted in so brief a description, which might perhaps more fully illustrate the generalities of the Design, yet which to the practical mind are unimportant, as the controlling features are the predominating points to be attained, and more deliberately considered. The mere minutiae of detail being susceptible of many changes in its arrangement with scarcely any modification of plan.

In the Post Office Working Departments, it is absolutely impossible for any architect to accurately calculate for its complex machinery, and it is a matter which doubtless, with the increased capacities and facilities which will be afforded it, will exact the utmost ingenuity and skill of even those thoroughly conversant with *all* of its requirements to divide and arrange it to meet the demands of the occasion. Possibly I may have shown as correct an appreciation of the work involved as could be expected of one not familiar with it, but in the event that my attempts to locate the departments may not have been entirely successful, I have at least the satisfaction of knowing that the capacity, conveniences and all of the desirable points are still preserved, and that a rearrangement of apartments and divisions is a matter easily adjusted.

In the hope that your Honorable Body may discover in my humble effort some degree of merit, and perhaps the very Design most agreeable to your tastes and judgments—I respectfully submit it to your favorable consideration.





dows, and the different apartments grates and flues. The Design may thus be said to be *au fait*, with regard to light and ventilation.

#### HEATING.

The building should be heated by steam; not by direct radiation, but by air heated in sub-cellar or vaults by passing over coils or clusters of pipe, through which the steam is forced, to the different registers in the halls and apartments, by revolving fans, similar to the system adopted in the new Boston City Hospital, which not only heats in winter but ventilates in summer, and which is considered by the scientific men of the day as the most perfect mode yet adopted.

#### THE CONSTRUCTION.

The external walls to be of the purest and most durable of building marble, with the exception of basement plinth, to be of granite.

The interior walls of brick, supported by iron girders resting upon hollow and solid columns.

## FOUNDATIONS, ETC.

Ground to be piled, foundations to be laid with broad bases, and to have iron, or granite piers.

The partitions of iron, of skeleton frame, with galvanized iron lath, and plastered and frescoed ; perfectly plain.

Floors of iron and brick, with flooring of tile and wood.

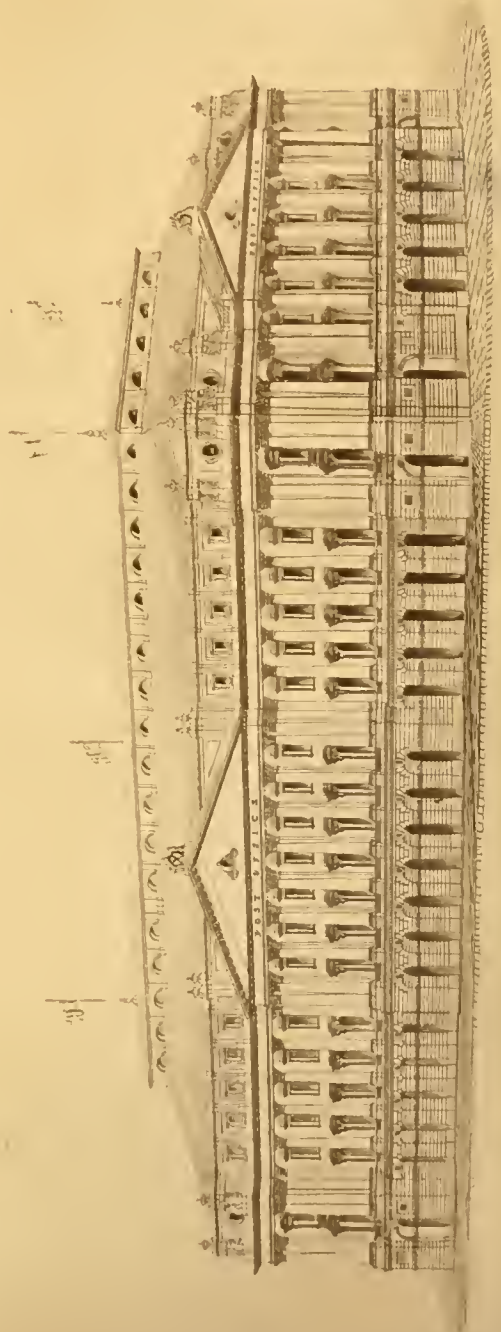
Doors and windows of wood. Doors to grand Post Office halls, ground story, opening from streets, to be locked simultaneously, in sections, to prevent confusion.

Roof of iron, covered with tin, and thoroughly painted.

Glass roof of iron, also, covered or inlaid with hammered or corrugated glass.

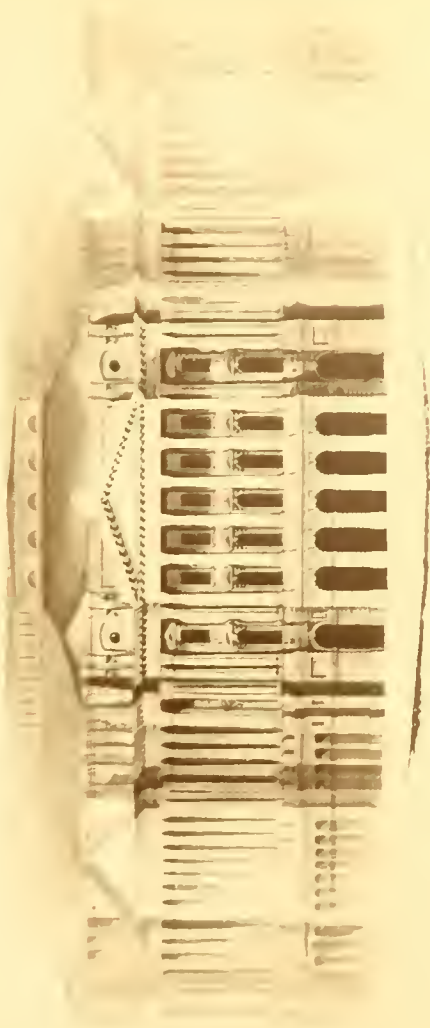
Walks to be excavated for vaults, and covered with granite blocks, resting upon iron girders and perforated with lights and man holes where requisite.

Sills of ground story to be of iron. Illuminated floor lights to be put where necessary.





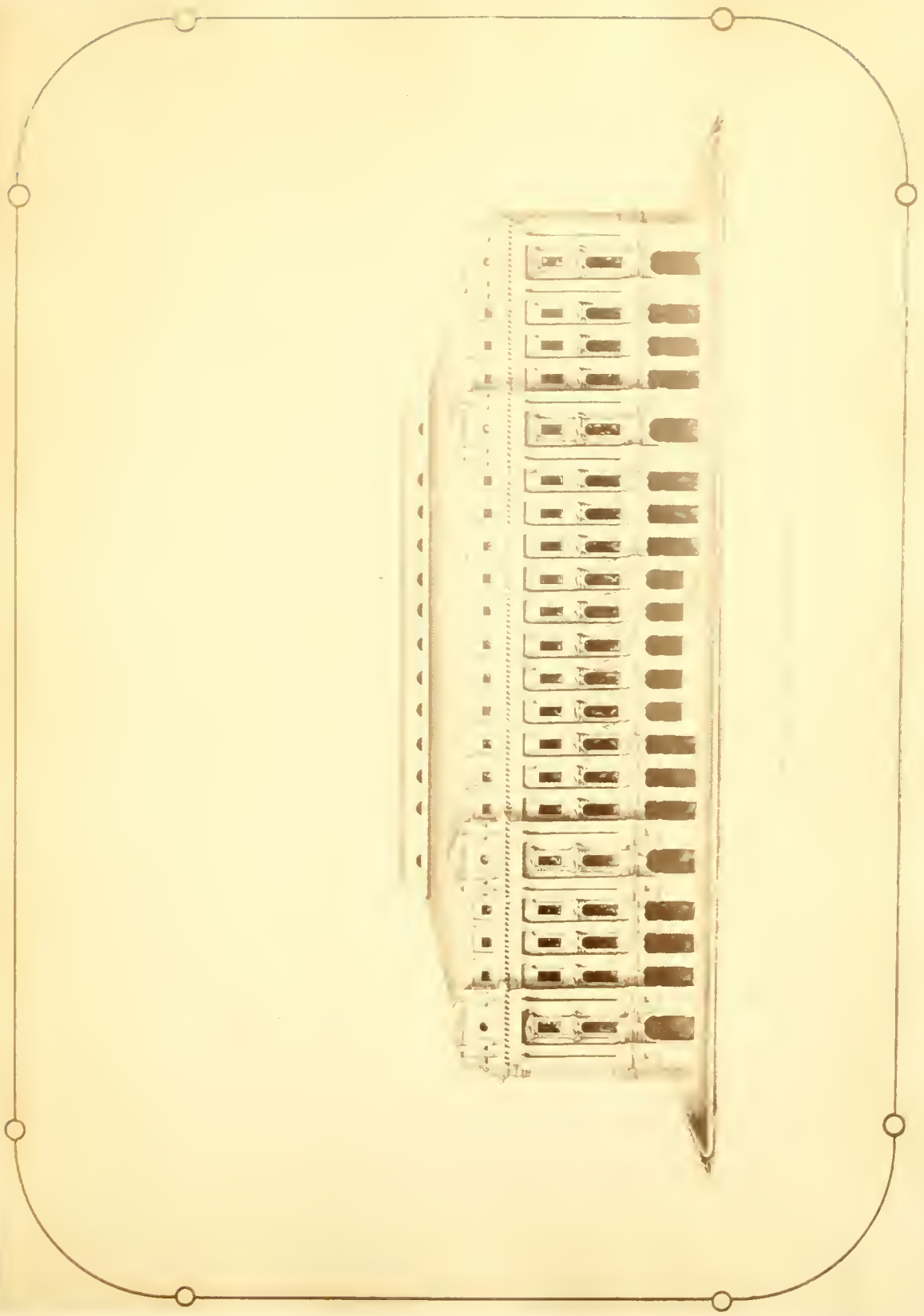




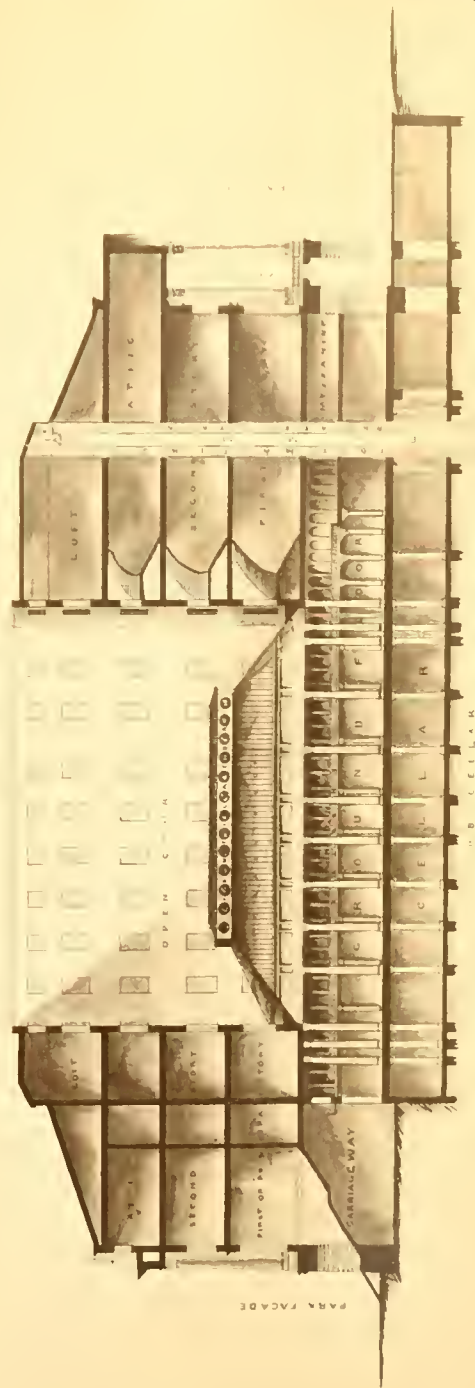








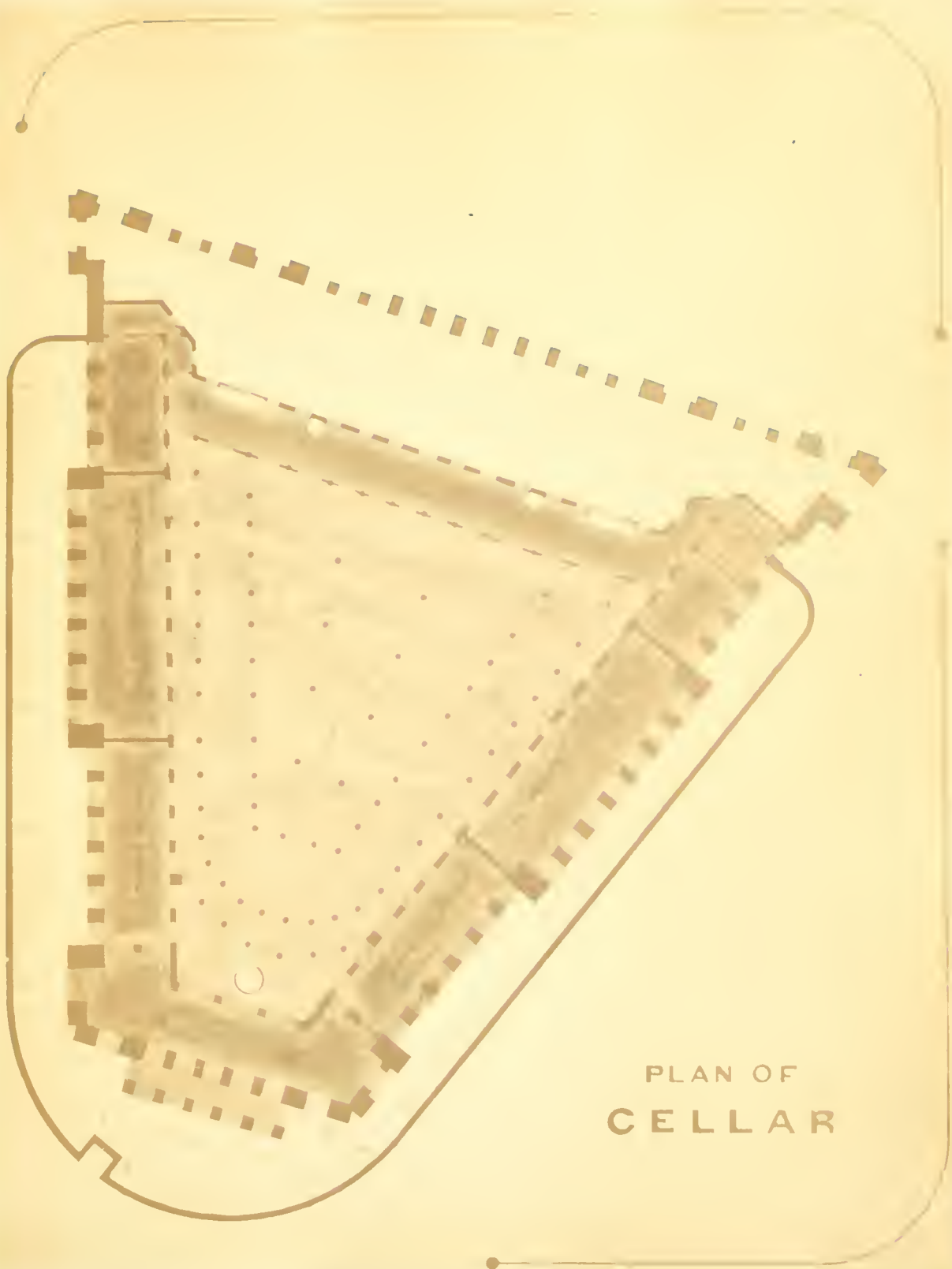




FLOOR PLAN







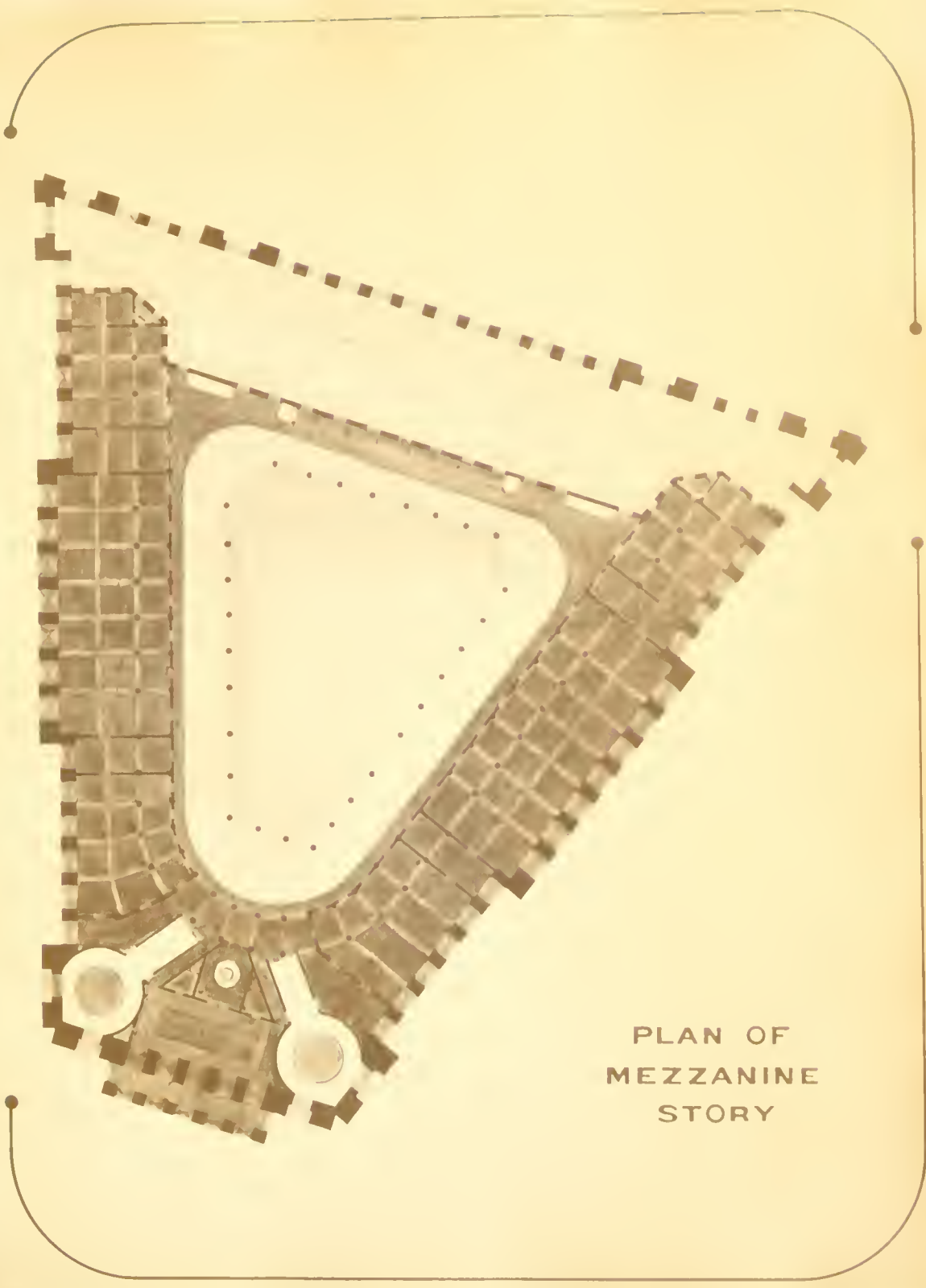
PLAN OF  
CELLAR





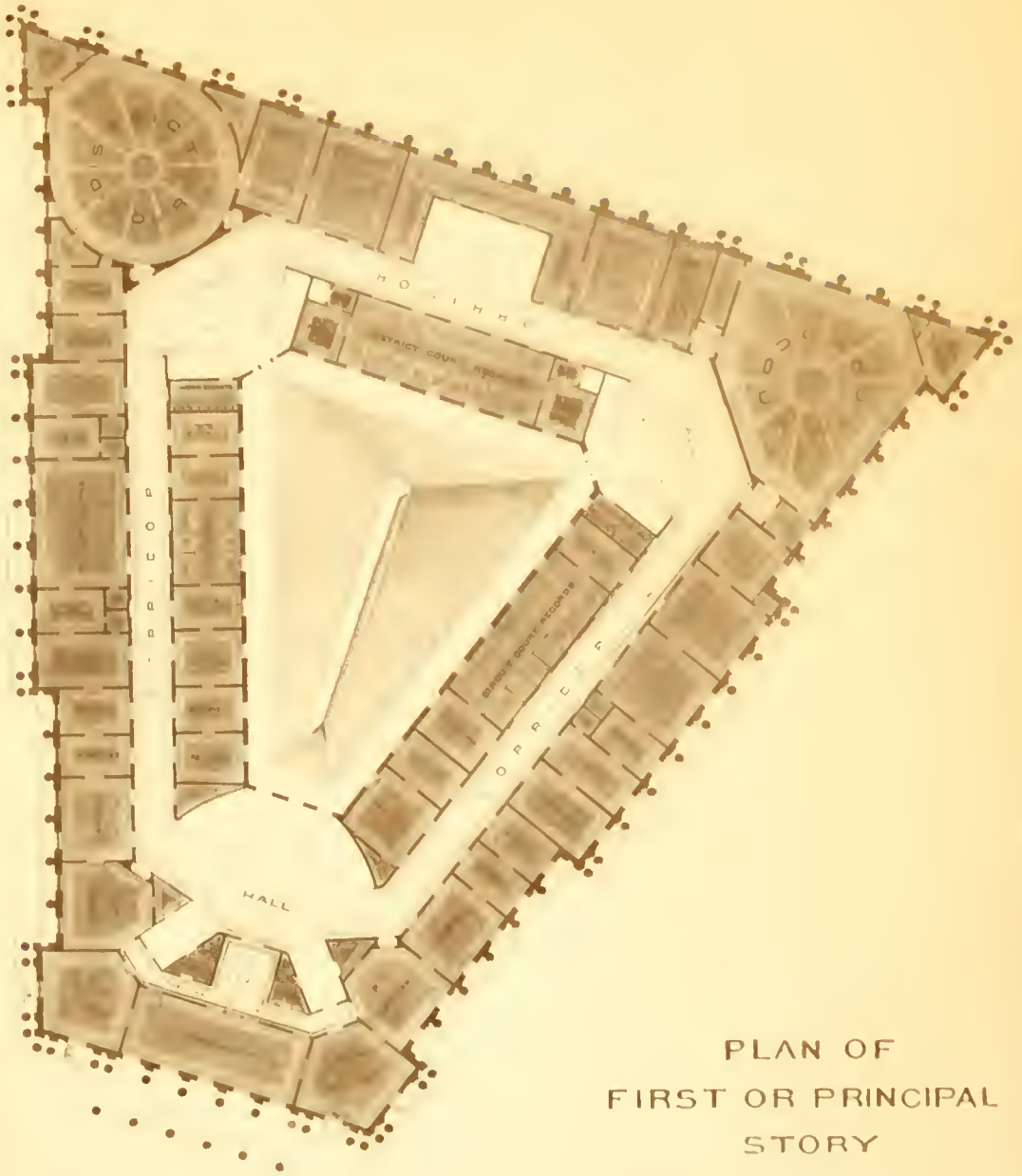
PLAN OF  
BASEMENT OR GROUND  
FLOOR





PLAN OF  
MEZZANINE  
STORY

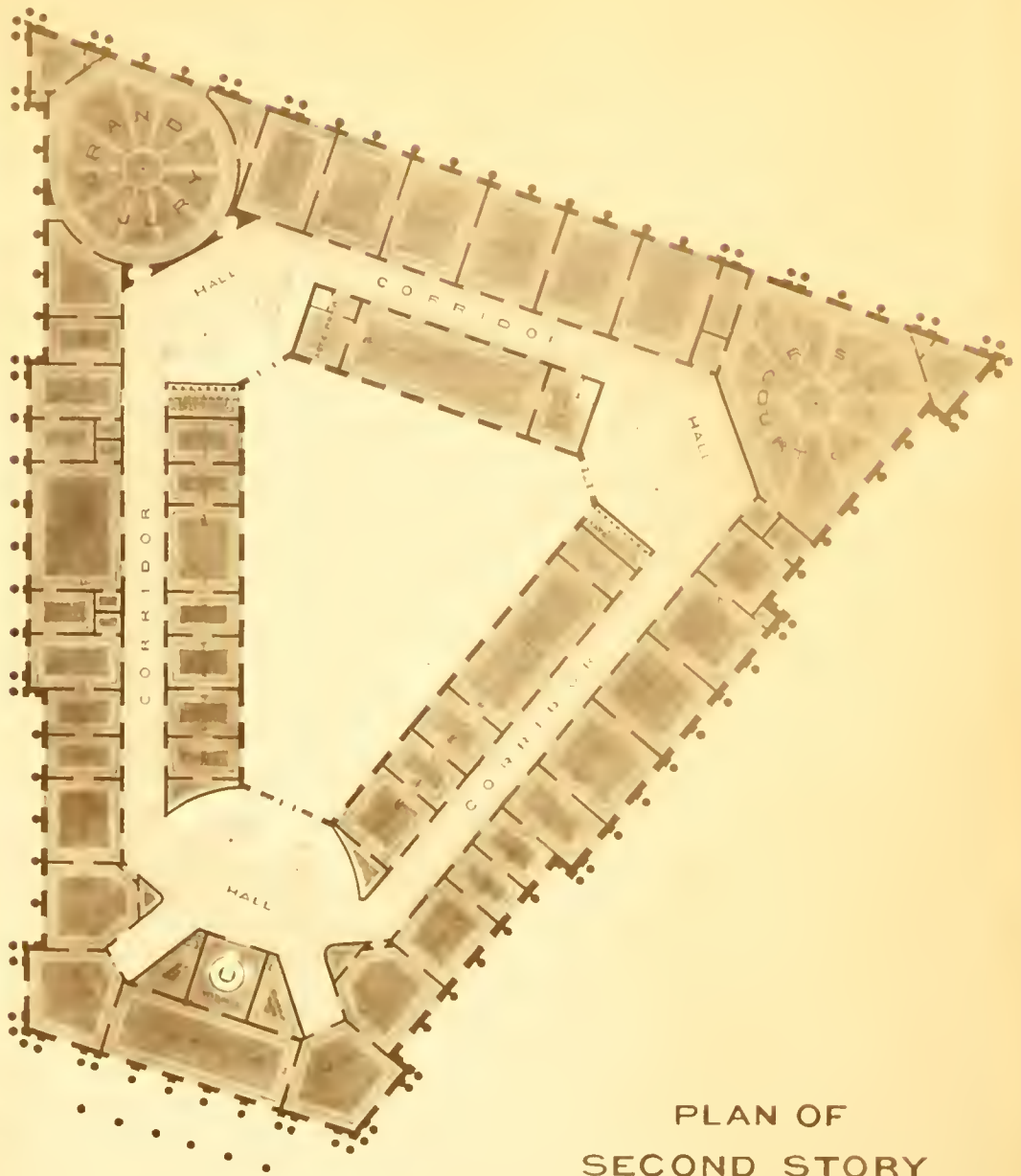




PLAN OF  
FIRST OR PRINCIPAL  
STORY

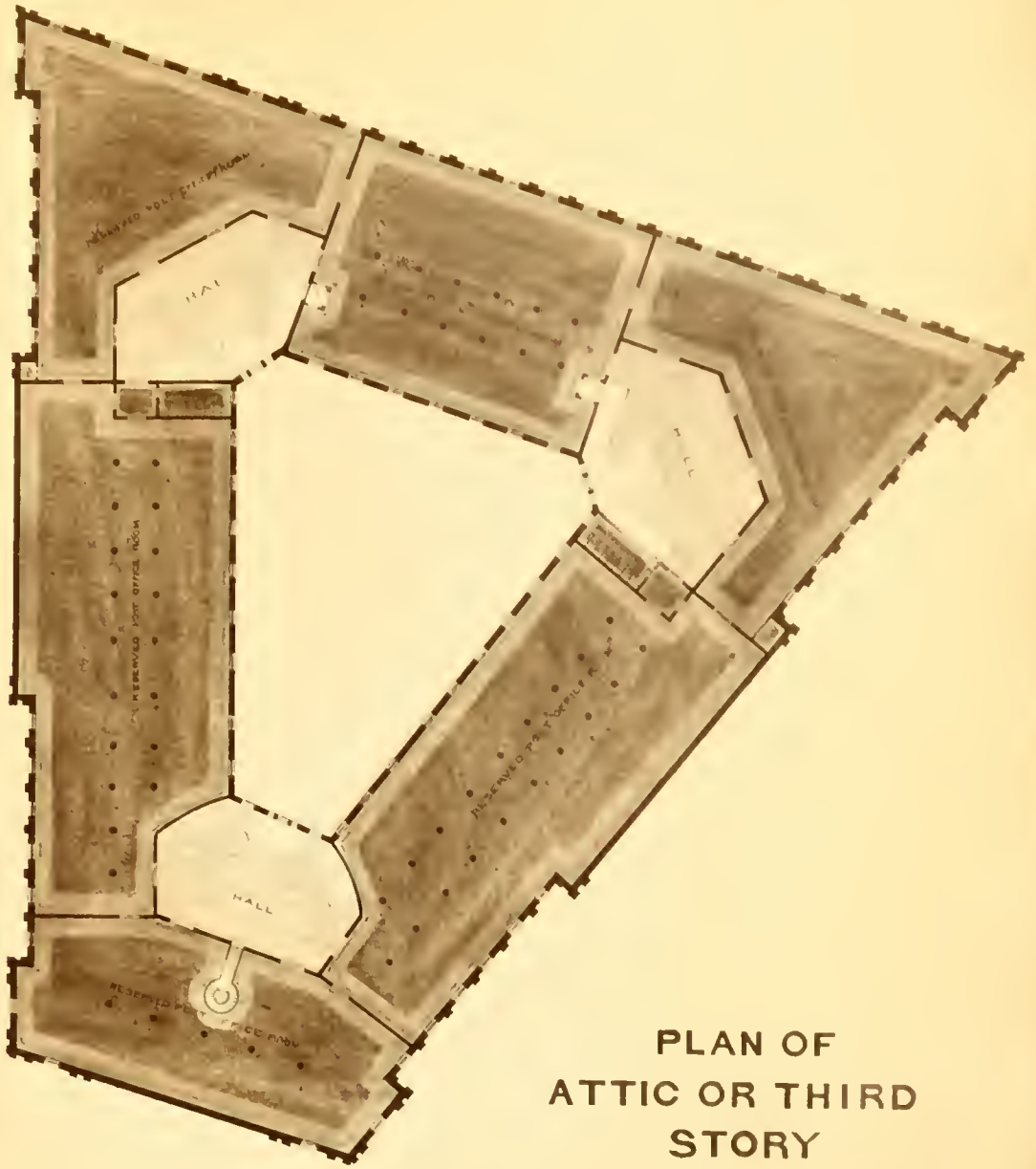






PLAN OF  
SECOND STORY





PLAN OF  
ATTIC OR THIRD  
STORY









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